

**The Washington State Part C System Improvement Project  
Stakeholder Meeting  
April 2010**

**Results of Participant Discussion on Early Intervention Practices**

During the meeting, participants engaged in table discussions around “Integrating Outcomes into the IFSP Process.” All the materials used for this activity are available in the April 2010 Update on the SIP website: [www.del.wa.gov/development/esit/system.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/development/esit/system.aspx). We suggest downloading the document “Integrating Outcomes Practices Summary Worksheet” for review along with this summary.

Participants were asked to rate and discuss how successfully each of the *Agreed Upon Practices* has been implemented in Washington, noting strengths, challenges and barriers to implementation. In general, participants thought that the lack of training and guidance for all providers on the IFSP process from first contact through transition, and challenges integrating the child outcomes, impacted many areas of implementation. The following summary indicates other, more specific feedback about barriers from participants. Strengths listed are those practices for which most groups rated the practice as Implemented. This document is a summary of the activity, and represents the collective feedback of the participants in attendance.

**First Contacts with Families from Referral to the IFSP Meeting**

**Strengths:**

- Become acquainted and establish rapport
- Engage in conversation to find out why the family is contacting early intervention and to identify the next appropriate step in the referral process
- As applicable, conduct a developmental screening
- Provide written prior notice along with all the procedural safeguards, and ask the family to sign consent for evaluation and assessment and release of medical or other records
- Determine if the child is eligible and explain and provide written prior notice

**Challenges:**

Participants rated Practices 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12 as those that either were “Not Implemented” or “Needed Improvement.” Functional evaluation and assessment of the child’s abilities and sharing information with families about early intervention services, gathering information from families, evaluation and assessment procedures, and the IFSP process were listed among the practices to which there are challenges to implementation.

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*Questions or comments about the content of this document may be directed to Kathy Grant-Davis, Program Consultant at the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program, at [kathryn.grant-davis@del.wa.gov](mailto:kathryn.grant-davis@del.wa.gov).*

**Barriers:**

- Insufficient time, including:
  - Time to meet the mandatory 45-day timeline
  - Time to get to know families
  - Time to allow families to grasp information about early intervention services
  - Time to complete thorough evaluations and assessments
- Need more training and resources ( brochures, handbooks, etc.) on how to effectively talk with families at each step of this initial stage, including:
  - Providing a context and description for families about early intervention and accountability through child and family outcomes measurement
  - Sharing enough information to inform families but not to overwhelm them
  - Beginning conversations with families about their routines, supports and resources, their concerns, and the role they would like to have in assessment and evaluation
  - Working with families in a culturally competent way
- Need more systemic and program knowledge, such as knowledge of services and supports available, knowledge of evaluation procedures and tools, and integration of required program elements with program philosophy
- Funding

### **The IFSP Meeting**

**Strengths:**

- Establish a welcoming and respectful climate for family members and caregivers as equal members of the IFSP team
- Collaboratively review information collected during the early contacts regarding family concerns, priorities and resources
- Identify the team member who will provide ongoing service coordination or explain that the primary service provider will also assume service coordinator responsibilities
- Ensure the family understands relevant procedural safeguards and next steps

**Challenges:**

Participants rated Practices 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 as those that either were “Not Implemented” or “Needed Improvement.” Talking with families about the IFSP document and evaluation results, collaboratively writing functional outcomes, providing natural environment justification statements and identification of transitions were listed among the practices to which there are challenges to implementation.

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**Barriers:**

- The IFSP form itself and the need for additional guidance on its use (i.e. justification statement on natural environments)
- Need more training and information to effectively blend clinical, functional and family information to develop functional goals
- Need more training and information to develop functional outcomes that also integrate child outcome information into IFSPs
- Insufficient time and funding
- Need more training and information about effective teaming, including:
  - Integration of roles and responsibilities
  - The family's role in and understanding of the IFSP process
- "Canned" transition procedures that focus solely on transition to Part B services and are lacking in coordination and collaboration

### **On-Going Intervention Practices**

**Strengths:**

- Build on or establish trust and rapport
- Modify the IFSP to reflect changes in supports, strategies, activities, or routines
- Prepare and assist with formal review and revisions of the IFSP
- Prepare families for transition out of Part C services
- Explain and follow the regulations, timelines, and procedures for transition plans, planning conferences, and data collection

**Challenges:**

Participants rated Practices 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 11 as those that either were "Not Implemented" or "Needed Improvement." Using the IFSP document as a guide for intervention sessions, involving families and caregivers in the intervention process and IFSP revisions, and completion of the COSF were listed among the practices to which there are barriers to implementation.

**Barriers:**

- Inconsistent use of the IFSP to guide the dynamic intervention process
- Need more training and information about how to implement routines based intervention within home and child care environments

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- Limited funding, including the narrow limits of what insurance will pay for or certain activities within practices that are not reimbursable
- Insufficient time, including
  - Time to modify the IFSP
  - Time to re-access the data system to make changes to IFSP
  - Time to collaborate with others.
- Inefficient data collection and entry into a complex and time consuming system
- Need more training and information on integrating child outcomes into the process
- Challenges with team coordination, including:
  - Disconnects between FRCs and service providers
  - Scheduling meetings for reviews
  - Ensuring team participation and involvement